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CHALLENGE

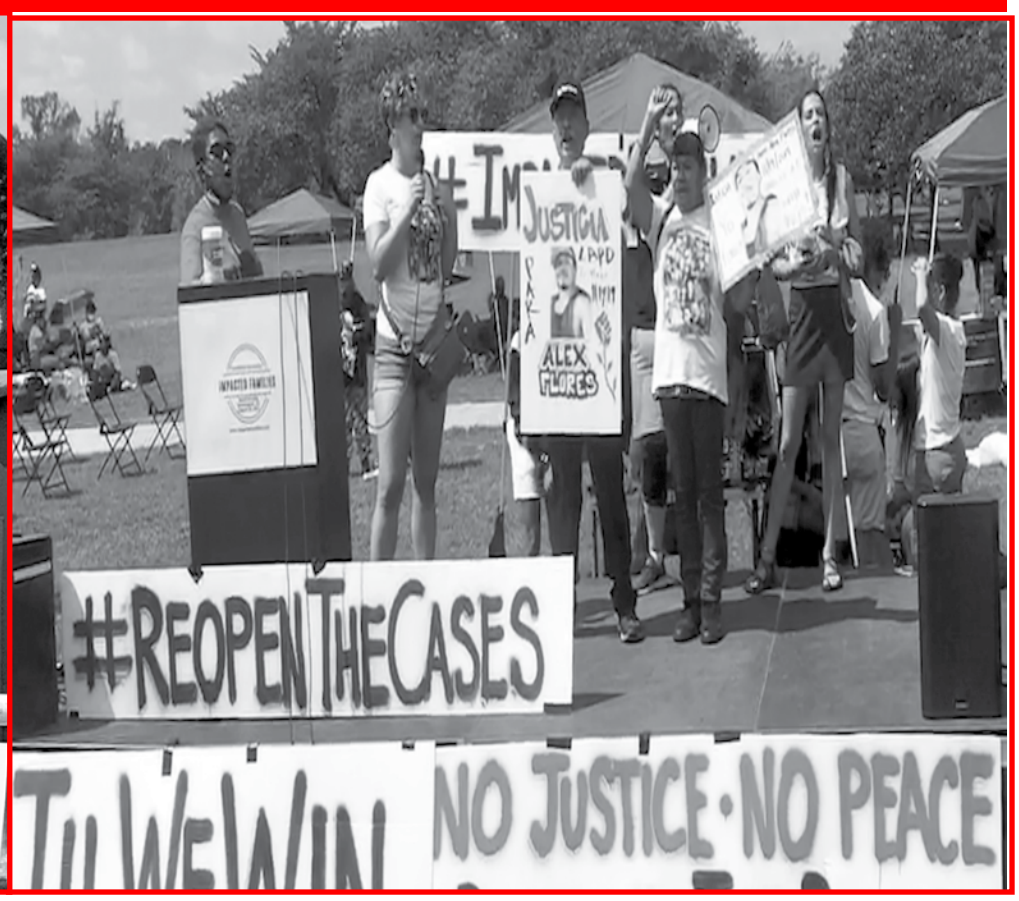
FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 53 No. 18 September 22, 2021 suggested donation $1

From LA to DC: Families, antiracists, communists—

SMASH RACIST POLICE TERROR



LOS ANGELES, CA, September 7—Progressive Labor Party (PLP), families from police murder victims, and friends from here and Balitmore joined the PLP in Washington, DC for the National March Against Police Brutality. Communist leadership in the movement against police terror is bringing fighters closer to a communist outlook and PLP.

Fighters get closer to communism

At the march, a young Latin worker mentioned her family was struggling after her youngest brother returned from war with PTSD. Last March, she witnessed the Los Angeles sheriff murder her other brother. Now, our sister-in-arms and her family struggle with mental health. This is just one of many examples of how imperialist war abroad and fascism at home have struck deadly blows on this family, like so many Black, Latin, immigrant and working-class folks around the country! Meanwhile, the kkkops continue to protect this racist, capitalist system, using terror to intimidate workers from fighting back.

The woman is one of the 40 family members representing 25 young Black and Latin workers murdered by kkkops in the LA area that travelled to Washington DC to attend the reformist Mass Action protest.

She seeks mental health support and helps destigmatize mental illness in her community and with other families. She's also making the political connections between police funding and their function in society. She sees how their exorbitant government budgets, including direct donations from Wall Street banks and major corporations, continue to soar, as cops continue to kill workers.

Since returning from the Mass Action Protest in DC, she's asked comrades and supporters to help her organize a protest to demand justice for her brother and expose the funding of the police. In the Party, we say that the capitalist class needs cops to defend their racist system. The only way to "defund" the cops is to smash the profit system with the hammer of communist revolution.

In addition to fundraising and organizing mass actions for families through the mass organization, PL'ers used communist literature as an organizing tool with the families. We have written multiple articles together and now have three families meeting in a Party club. The trip to DC was one more way in which to embed our communist analysis into the reformist mass action and "abolitionist" politics that permeate the mass organization.

LA families unite with Antwan's family

These murderous pigs continue to kill us and kill us and bring families together (see page 8). Two nights before we arrived in DC, multiple cops murdered Antwan Gilmore in his car after being startled awake by guns pointed in his window in the middle of the night. It turned out he was killed just outside of the hotel where we would be staying for the weekend. He was only 27 years old.

After we finished the main mass action at the "Dept. of Injustice," multiple families from Los Angeles joined the family of Antwan Gilmore and occupied the intersection for hours, exchanging condolences, solidarity, and a fighting spirit. When the racist pigs kill, they unwittingly force families to unite coast to coast. Our goal is to win these families to our Party and be revolutionary leaders in our fight to destroy capitalism with communist revolution!

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SCAN ME

OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $1. One Year: $20. Six months: $15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, September 22, 2021•Volume 53 No. 18

Editorial

U.S. dominance crashing towards world war

The deadly August 26 suicide bombing at Kabul's international airport was yet another gut punch to the stature of the United States, an imperialist world power in steep decline. After the ISIS-K small-time terrorists claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed close to 200 workers and 13 U.S. military personnel, the leader of the world's largest terrorist gang countered with a drone strike that slaughtered at least 10 civilians, including seven children (New York Times, 9/5). "We will hunt you down and make you pay" (Reuters, 8/27), said U.S. President Joe Biden. But Biden's bluster fooled no one. The chaotic military withdrawal exposed the weakness of the U.S. ruling class as they move toward fascism and broader war in a more and more volatile world.

Because make no mistake: The end of the latest imperialist disaster in Afghanistan is no move toward peace. In fact, it opens the door for the U.S. bosses to accelerate their fascist build-up to a conflict with China and possibly Russia, their main capitalist rivals. But the U.S. rulers' disunity, incompetence, and general disarray are only intensifying as they prepare for the inevitable collision.

In a period when the international working class is faced with the worst that capitalism has to offer—a deepening climate crisis, an unchecked pandemic, racist and sexist terror, and mass unemployment—the absolute necessity for workers to fight back is clear. Our only path forward is to build the international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) as our weapon to destroy capitalism and the mass-murdering bosses once and for all.

U.S. bosses struggle to chart a course toward war

At a time when Biden—and the finance capital Big Fascist (see glossary, page 6) bosses he represents—desperately need internal unity to chart a new path, their system lies in turmoil. Killer floods and wildfires, a new wave of Covid-19 deaths, and mounting unemployment are the glaring realities of pandemic-era capitalism.

Biden faces his own crisis of legitimacy. He rebuked his top military brass after they opposed the abrupt pullout. Now his generals are predicting that Afghanistan could soon collapse into civil war (Al Jazeera, 9/5). Biden's trillion-dollar-plus infrastructure bill, a necessity for the U.S. bosses to compete with their Chinese adversaries, could wind up torpedoed—not just by the isolationist Small Fascists who have hijacked the Republican Party, but also by some of Biden's assumed allies in Congress (ABC News, 9/5).

The Big Fascists' long-term plan to use higher tax rates to raise money for war and discipline their own class, a hallmark of fascism, is meeting fierce resistance from companies like the multi-trillion-dollar Apple and finance capital mainstay Exxon Mobil (Business Insider, 9/3).

Most concerning for the U.S. rulers is their inability to win allegiance from a war-weary population to fight the bigger wars to come. Working-class youth—many of them jobless and in crushing debt, and infuriated by racist and sexist police terror—reject the notion of dying for a rotten U.S. empire. Among polled workers under the age of 30, only 38 percent voiced a "great deal of support" for the military, down 15 percentage points from just three years ago (military.com, 3/10).

Chinese, Russian imperialists exploit U.S. debacles

The U.S. debacle in Afghanistan has handed China and Russia an opportunity to present themselves as more reliable partners in Central Asia and other regions. As most nations were forced to evacuate their embassy staff during the upheaval in Kabul, both China and Russia kept their embassies open (Foreign Policy, 9/2).

A Chinese state spokeswoman gladly poured salt in the U.S. bosses' open wound, describing a teenager's deadly fall from a jet as "American myth down… More and more people are awakening" (Wall Street Journal, 9/1).

While the U.S. bosses spin their wheels trying to patch their crumbling infrastructure, strengthening ties between the drug cartel known as the Taliban and Chinese imperialism will be a big boost for China's Belt and Road Initiative, which has already tied more than 130 countries to the rising global powerhouse (CFR, 3/24). The more China expands its economic and military influence, the greater the risk of a big-power clash spilling into war.

Perhaps the biggest wild card in this unstable mix remains the Russian bosses, who have joined China in bashing the U.S. According to President Vladimir Putin, the U.S. achieved nothing in Afghanistan "but tragedy and loss of life" (Reuters, 9/1). Analysts believe that Biden's abandonment of the Afghan government could embolden Russian military forces in their ongoing conflict with U.S. ally Ukraine (Atlantic Council, 8/16).

No honor among thieves capitalist alliances waver

The so-called "Biden Doctrine," an open rejection of "nation-building," could spell the end of U.S. leadership of the old and faltering liberal world order. It's also a big concern for traditional U.S. allies. The U.S. unilateral withdrawal from Afghanistan, said the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell Fontelles, was "a catastrophe for the Afghan people, for Western values and credibility and for the developing of international relations" (NYT, 9/4).

U.S. unreliability has led France, Italy, and Germany, among other nations, to turn to self-preservation and new affiliations. Armin Laschet, the minister-president of Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia, stated that European nations needed to "lessen their dependence on the U.S." (Washington Post, 8/31).

As the U.S. burns bridges with European leaders, it's making overtures toward Asian nations that lie within striking distance of China. Around the same time that the suicide blast rocked the airport in Kabul, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris visited Singapore and Vietnam in a brazen move to curry favor (Yahoo News, 8/31). Even more ominously, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command recently laid out a proposal calling for construction of a missile chain among islands in Japan and the Philippines (Nikkei Asia, 4/16).

The international fight for communism will free our class

The imperialist bosses continue to show that they are driven by their need for maximum profits—at any and all costs to the working class. But workers continue to fight back! In Afghanistan today, the most victimized workers—including a number of women—have led fearless actions against the violent Taliban bosses, demanding safety even as they are beaten (CNN, 9/4).

These fighters have bravely displayed their allegiance to the working class despite the retaliation they knew they'd receive. But to end the brutality and oppression of capitalism, they must take the next step and join the international fight for communist revolution. Only by smashing the profit system can we end sexism, racism, and imperialist war. Join the PLP and fight to win!✪

Student-worker unity

Alabama coal miner strike: solidarity, struggle, revolution

PL'ers volunteered with the miners' Women's Auxiliary. Women organize and lead the logistical challenges of keeping multiple 24/7 picket lines supplied and 1,100 miners' families fed and clothed.

BROOKWOOD, AL—City University of New York (CUNY) students and faculty in the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) concluded a solidarity week in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, supporting 1,100 Black and white striking miners at the Warrior Met Coal Company. The miners have been striking since April 1 over outrageous safety violations, deep wage cuts, and slashed benefits, amid record coal profits. They have made history as Alabama's longest strike.

Thousands of other miners, nearby Amazon workers, and railroad workers at CSX (see sidebar) are watching this strike. Warrior Met miners can potentially spread working-class rebellion throughout the South. PLP stands with these miners who have exposed "democracy" as a capitalist dictatorship. We are learning from the militant fightback and leadership of our new friends, as we build a mass Party for communism, where workers like the Alabama miners run the world.

Despite the lies told about communism, many miners already have an idea of communism through solidarity. In Alabama, Black and white miners and their families are experiencing a glimpse of communism, as antiracist solidarity characterizes their strike. Communism means smashing racism, sexism, imperialism, money, and nationalism. The working class can and will run society, without Warrior Met, Wall Street, or any capitalists.

Antiracist solidarity sets the tone

In Alabama, we drove into the mountains to a mine portal (entrance) that we found on a map. Miners maintain 24/7 camps at each mine portal. We were met with two contradictory responses. First came anticommunism: one miner told us, before we even spoke, to take our "agenda" and leave. We ignored the hostility and introduced ourselves to every miner. The second response set the tone for the week: solidarity. Most miners welcomed us, offering food and shade. They invited us to their picket line for anti-scab duties during shift change.

This initial anticommunism came partially from the poisonous role played by revisionists (fake leftist groups). They had descended on the strike like parasites, shouting empty political slogans, giving wooden speeches, and acting like bosses. We were thanked for first showing up to stand alongside fellow workers and listening, learning, and helping with whatever work the strike required.

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Rail workers in antiracist solidarity with miners

The striking miners at Warrior Met Coal have much to teach the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and the international working class about multiracial unity. During one political conversation, a white coal miner explained: "If I'm racist toward [a Black coworker] it gets you killed. You can't bring any of that down there because we all depend on each other to survive."

A Black miner agreed, "It means we all die. Besides after 12 hours, we're all covered in coal dust and you can't really tell anyway."

This multiracial solidarity is having an impact on rail workers at CSX, one of the largest freight railroads east of the Mississippi River. We learned from the miners that the rail workers at CSX are angry at being overworked and are pissed off that CSX is carrying scab coal.

As soon as we learned this, PL'ers moved into action. We drafted and printed a leaflet while researching CSX rail yards. After first failing, we finally found a railroad yard. While distributing 100 leaflets, we met enthusiastic rail workers who told us "all of us are pissed! But our union is in bed with CSX and the mine owners.

We talk about it every day but there's no leadership." Just like that, we gained a friendship and a CHALLENGE subscription.

PLP applauds the CSX train engineers for refusing to drive trains into mine portals, and forcing their supervisors to do it. PLP also supports the mass movement among CSX workers pushing their union misleadership to stop ALL train shipments of scab coal anywhere in the railroad system. While the miners have been bleeding Warrior Met of superprofits, one of the ways that Warrior Met is trying to starve the miners out is through moving scab coal by CSX-owned railroads to the Port of Mobile, Alabama.

Like with Warrior Met, BlackRock is a major CSX shareholder. Like the overworked miners, the bosses are overworking CSX rail workers. In recent years CSX has been exhausting rail workers with schedule changes so bad they risk workers' safety and have cut their time off.

The U.S. bosses have always used the Southern states as a low-wage, non-union haven where the widest pay gaps between Black and white workers sharpen racism and drag down wages everywhere. Armed with communist politics, miners and rail workers united in working-class solidarity can engulf the entire South in rebellion and workers' power!

Brooklyn: antiracist outcry over Haiti earthquake

BROOKLYN, September 4—"Same enemy, same fight! Workers of the world, unite!" rang through the streets of Flatbush neighborhood. As the bosses' racist attacks on workers in Haiti continue unabated, more than 30 members and friends of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) unfurled banners in solidarity with our working-class sisters and brothers in Haiti today. We expressed anti-imperialist and internationalist politics and brought a message of revolutionary hope. Not false hope through elections or fake leftist misleaders, but through confidence in the international working class to one day overthrow this vicious racist imperialist system. And build a communist world–without nations, borders, the ever-present threat of war, and profit-driven disasters.

Learning to fight collectively

A PLP club at the City University of New York (CUNY), with little collective experience, planned a successful rally and learned rich lessons. We began reaching out to students and staff from several CUNY campuses and friends made in the #SOSColombia movement (see CHALLENGE, 9/8). We also had several study groups that drew connections between U.S. imperialism and racism in Israel-Palestine, Colombia and Haiti, using CHALLENGE articles to anchor each discussion.

The use of a Colombian death squad to assassinate Haiti's president illustrated yet another blatant example of the relationship between U.S. imperialism and fascism in Colombia and Haiti. Building international working-class solidarity has been a focal point of our discussions and actions, especially following the devastating earthquake and hurricane.

Days before the rally, two comrades posted 200 flyers along Flatbush Avenue and Church Avenue. Passersby gave enthusiastic support. We made new contacts, saw old friends, and sold CHALLENGE along the way.

Internationalism and food fuel our movement

Before the rally, we held a covid-safe banner making party. We shared a delicious spread of pizza and home-cooked food including Haitian-style pasta and pikliz. This nourished a debate over elections, reform versus communist revolution, and the connections between workers in Colombia and Haiti.

While many disagreements remain, we were in agreement on the urgent need for smashing racism, and fighting for internationalism. This helped decide the slogans for our banners and we began painting to the music of Colombia's Joe Arroyo and Haiti's Emeline Michel. The banners read, "Smash Imperialism from: U.S. to China to Russia" and "Solidarity with Workers in Haiti—Smash Racism!"

Haiti means FIGHT BACK!

When we unfurled our banners in this working-class Caribbean neighborhood, some cars honked and workers raised their fists in support. We carried posters demanding COVID-19 vaccines and immediate aid sent to Haiti. Others carried signs connecting workers in Haiti's fight with the striking Alabama miners, and with miners in Colombia and Haiti.

We distributed 500 CHALLENGEs. To conclude our rally, we marched on the sidewalks and finally took over a street lane with chants of "Asian, Latin, Black and white! Workers of the world unite!" and "Koupe tèt, boule kay!" (cut off their [bosses'] heads, burn down their houses in Kreyol).

Lessons learned

We are learning how to fight for solidarity and working class internationalism, while exposing our common enemy, imperialism. We're learning how to build toward revolution through regular study groups, social events, and protests.

Most of all we learned that as U.S. imperialism declines and marches our class toward World War III, we need to be bolder in bringing our politics to the international working class. Workers are looking for answers. We are building communist revolution through practice, making mistakes, and growing. ✪

Hurricane Ida

Capitalism fails workers in climate crisis, again

Hurricane Ida ripped through the U.S. and exposed once again the utter failure of capitalism to provide even the most basic necessities for millions of workers. The latest in a long and rapidly growing list of capitalist-created disasters, the system's breakdown in the wake of Ida has killed nearly 100 people, many drowned in their homes, left over a million without power for more than a week, and hundreds of thousands more without drinking water. While the wealthy centers of New Orleans and New York were left relatively unscathed, the working-class areas where many Black, immigrant and poor white workers live took the brunt of the damage.

As the bosses fight in their tug of war for control, no outcome will serve the interests of our class. Only a communist society based on workers' power can put the needs of the masses front and center. The urgency in mobilizing our class to fight for communist revolution grows with each capitalist-created disaster, pandemic, war or financial crisis.

Hurricane Ida hit the U.S.in Louisiana and took out the majority of the state's power system. In the Northeast, workers were left unwarned as flash floods hit. The ruling class has crowed that the levees built over the last 15 years kept New Orleans from completely flooding, but many workers were again left stranded. This time without electricity or drinking water. Over a week later, over a million are without electricity indefinitely (NY Times, 9/7).

New Orleans: bosses sacrifice the working class

As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the ruling class is more openly sacrificing the working class. First, they leave millions to die from Covid-19. Now, with capitalist climate disasters and crumbling infrastructure, they allow workers to die from thirst, heat, and drowning.

In Louisiana the massive damage to the power grid and water system from Ida was preventable. The ruling class spent $14 billion dollars to insufficiently fortify the levee system around New Orleans and did nothing to strengthen the power grid or protect the drinking water system. The new levee system around New Orleans represents only part of what engineers determined was needed, is already eroding, and was breached at least once (Curbed, 9/2). The advice to New Orleans residents from "their" Mayor was "don't come back" (NYT, 8/31).

Just outside of New Orleans in working-class areas, people were left at the mercy of the hurricane without upgraded levees. LaPlace, a mainly Black town adjacent to New Orleans, flooded more than ever. People there blamed the new system protecting New Orleans for the flooding that destroyed their homes (NPR, 8/31).

NYC: capitalism thrives on poverty housing

The New York City area was inundated with flash floods: thousands caught in their cars, subway system, and basement apartments (NYT, 9/3). Many of the 60, so far, people who have died in the New York City area drowned after being trapped in their apartments. Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands live in basement apartments due to exorbitant housing costs (NYT, 9/7).

New York's economy depends on extremely high housing costs and low wage service workers. Instead of ensuring affordable, safe housing for the working class, the city's bosses and officials look the other way as workers live in unofficial basement apartments that became death traps when flash floods hit the area and the city and state's emergency notification system failed to warn people (NYT, 9/7).

Workers' power replaces profit motive with working-class needs

The driving force behind the extreme weather, broken infrastructure and lack of emergency planning is the profit system. Capitalism is to blame. The world has the technology and knowledge to prepare for hurricanes and protect people from death. But capitalism, driven by the profit motive, ensnares people in a system that will always, at the end of the day, put the bosses' profits first.

We need a society that prioritizes the needs of the working class, which is possible only when we eliminate profits and run society. Our class will be abandoned and sacrificed on a larger and larger scale as the capitalists navigate infrastructure disasters while preparing for world war. We can respond to their crisis by building a movement for communist revolution and a society based on workers' power. You need to join PLP. ✪

PL'er helps fired co-worker beat back racist bosses

NEW YORK CITY, September 5—A Progressive Labor Party (PLP) struggle in the MTA's NYCT division (Metropolitan Transportation Agency/New York City Transit) to help a fellow train operator with a wrongful termination lawsuit has resulted in the agency rehiring her with full back pay. A year and a half after the racist transit bosses allowed its mostly Black and Latin workers to die from Covid-19 (The Guardian, 4/21/20), this is a critical development. While a win in the bosses' legal system is far from real working-class justice, it puts our fightback in public transit on the right track to organize workers for communist revolution.

Sick system disregards the sick

When the PLP member first received word that the MTA bosses had fired Maria, he contacted fellow transit comrades for advice. A woman worker connected us with a civil service lawyer experienced in fighting the MTA. She and the PL'er helped launch a Go Fund Me to raise legal funds, after Maria said she wanted to fight for her job. They promoted it on social media and a local news station did a story on the firing.

The heartless bosses had let Maria go because of "excessive '' sick time usage and absences while on probation (she began training in 2019 with fellow PL'er), but that doesn't tell the whole story. In February 2020, officials ordered her to stay home for four days when she mentioned having a fever. That June, when a senior train operator training her had an incident where he was drug tested, so was Maria, and the bosses held her out for additional days. These days also unfairly counted against her.

The bosses used those total missing days as justification for extending her probation by six months. When she had to take an additional four days to care for her mother, who had suffered a stroke, Transit fired her this past January.

Racist bosses, do-nothing union

Maria's case perfectly displayed the MTA bosses' racist, sexist callousness towards its workforce. This young Latin worker came to work daily, had a flawless operational record, and risked her life during the pandemic to transport essential workers while the bosses cowered in their homes. Termination was how they repaid her efforts! The MTA is especially ruthless against probationary hires, who virtually cannot call out sick for an entire year or face similar penalties.

Per usual, the union proved useless. Her union rep didn't even return her phone calls. The PL'er later went to a union meeting and blasted Transit Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 representatives for their racist negligence. They repeatedly told him that since Maria was on probation, there was nothing they could do for her. The TWU's inaction should come as no surprise, given how little they have fought to keep workers safe during Covid. Unions have become a shell of their former selves, and the union misleaders are all in bed with the bosses.

Pushing through anti-communism

The PL'er had initial doubts this would work. His anti-communist fears had him wondering how many would donate to the fundraiser. But support poured in, from co-workers to supervisors and also fellow comrades outside work. Workers have one another's backs!

Getting Maria her job back is a win, but our fight is far from over. The PL'er continues to meet with Maria regularly, gives her CHALLENGE, and struggles with her to see that it's not just the union or the transit bosses, this whole damn system has to go! We look forward to continuing this fight with our co-workers in the MTA, laying down the tracks that will lead our class to the communist world we deserve.✪

Students, workers, parents—sickening schools mean fight back!

NEW YORK CITY, September 8—As a new school year begins, working-class students and families are again faced with dangerous lose-lose conditions created by capitalism in crisis. Rising numbers of Covid-19 cases, crumbling school buildings, and a demand to return to business as usual threaten the lives of students, their families, and education workers. This is unfolding as the shortcomings of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan, next door to their main rival China, are on full display to the world (See Editorial, page 2). This school year, let's continue to build student-worker-parent solidarity and turn crises into opportunities to build a culture of fightback for communist ideas and culture.

A divided U.S. ruling class united in contempt for workers' lives

Led by President Joe Biden, the finance capitalist Big Fascists are trying to create a more unified approach to schooling. The Small-Fascist Republicans are more domestically oriented and isolationist. In states like Florida and Tennessee the governors attacked smaller city governments that pushed for more vaccinations and use of masks in schools. In response the U.S. Department of Education launched civil rights investigations and lawsuits to block the attacks.

It's a deadly mistake to think that Biden, the federal courts, or local Democratic politicians in cities like New York and Los Angeles, are motivated to protect the safety of the working class. As the dominant grouping since World War II, these Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To maintain this dominance against their rivals, the Big Fascists need a future generation of workers, soldiers, and managers that are willing to fight and die for this unequal system.

A "lost generation" disillusioned and unfit for this task will hinder their ability to wage such a war. Liberals' phony, silver-tongued appeals to workers that "we are all in this together" and empty assurances that "we are ready" show that the liberal wing is the main danger to the working class.They are just as ready as ever to have workers die from both Covid-19 and World War III for their long-term profits.

The blatant disregard for workers' lives shown by both wings of the U.S. ruling class is a hallmark of rising fascism. Capitalists of any stripe are workers' enemies.

Fight to learn, learn to fight

Capitalist schooling trains us to treat the working class as expendable. We are taught to accept that some workers and youth will be homeless, unemployed, homeless, incarcerated, or killed. Education workers are habituated to accept some dropouts, suspensions, and failure as unavoidable. Capitalist schools also teach patriotism and build loyalty to U.S. imperialism. If millions of youth question capitalism, while the façade of stability crumbles, imperialists will have a harder time winning workers to fight a war against China. Thus as students and education workers fight to learn, they must also learn to fight a capitalist system that fails our class daily.

Even before the pandemic, capitalist schools were unsafe: suspensions, crumbling toxic-filled walls, unhealthy cafeteria food, racist police criminalizing Black and Latin students. The Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked additional havoc on student learning. Students have learned even less under these conditions and the bosses plans to catch students up will be plagued with cracks and holes for working-class students to fall through.

Communists and many antiracist education workers refuse to accept this fate. We know the working class is full of fighters, and that whether remote or in-person, education workers and students must use the sharp study of math, science, history and language to understand the racist poison of capitalism and the need for a new, communist society.

Education workers must fight back alongside their students and parents against the bosses' system, which has set our class up to fail in what will certainly be a tough school year. Every rotten aspect of capitalist schools reinforces the same lesson for us: a system that can't educate and care for its youth does not deserve to exist, and we must learn together what it will take to smash it.Join the fight with PLP!✪

What Would Communists Do?

In a communist society, our education system would be centered around societal needs. Free of the chains of profit, all sectors of society would be mobilized to collectively combat a crisis like Covid-19. We would rapidly and massively invest labor and materials to retrofit school buildings, improve ventilation and sanitation systems, and convert spaces for learning. Of course, schools would have been built and maintained in the interest of student health and safety in the first place!

Moreover, education under communism would surely not be confined to school buildings. In the face of a pandemic, workers and youth would learn in the midst of struggle from a young age. We could train thousands to create and administer vaccines, Covid-19 tests, as well as distribute food and supplies We would undertake campaigns as the Soviet Union did to train young people to take leadership in practical, creative work in the farms and factories, or as China did sending students into the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Retiree raises solidarity funds for workers in Haiti

I've been politically active in a large union for over 50 years as a worker and a retiree. I have led struggles on the job and tried to connect those struggles to events around the world and to build solidarity with workers' struggles around the world.

When the recent earthquake left 2,000 people dead in Haiti and many thousands others injured and without shelter, food, clean water and health facilities, I brought the issue of international solidarity to my retiree association meeting in the form of a request for financial support.

I asked for a donation of $5,000 with a plan for a Haitian "hometown" association functioning in New York City and in Haiti to distribute the funds to working class folks in the small towns hard hit by the earthquake. One retiree asked if he could make an amendment. I was pleasantly surprised by his suggestion that we increase the donation to $7,500. We voted to send the larger amount.

At the end of the meeting, another retiree, who is from Haiti, said that he was proud that our association had taken this action in support of our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

★★★★★

Immigration march coming up in DC

On September 21 a coalition of groups from different states will march in Washington DC to demand that the Biden government pass immigration reform for all undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S. Previously, various administrations have proposed immigration reform bills which have failed because the capitalist politicians didn't agree with the proposals. They demanded requirements from immigrants to begin the process of legalization that in the majority of cases were impossible to complete.

The capitalists will never "agree" to resolve the problems of the working class. For them immigration reform means to guarantee a source of cheap labor to exploit in agriculture, factories, services and other sectors and especially to amass immigrant youth to enter the military to be cannon fodder in imperialist wars.

On September 21, PLP members will unite with our sisters and brothers, immigrant workers and their families in a mass march demanding immigration reform and amnesty for all immigrants. We will widely distribute CHALLENGE. We need to grow our bases into millions of workers organized for communist revolution and the seizure of power for a world in which the working class won't need "reforms" nor "amnesty" because we will abolish all borders that separate us. We will be one international working class as we rid ourselves of all vestiges of capitalism. Only a united working class can lead an egalitarian society in which we will work collectively for the well being of all, a new communist society led by PLP.

CHALLENGE response: We need to expose the liberal bosses' plans to use immigration reform as a path to fascism and war. Immigrant workers *who are* willing to embrace nationalism, patriotism, and sacrifice *themselves* will be pawns of U.S. imperialists who are desperate for legitimacy and all-class unity against their rivals China and Russia. Emphasizing this can help arm our class against all faces of fascism.

★★★★★

Response: no genetic defects from nuclear bombing

The September 8 issue of CHALLENGE's article entitled "Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Bombed to Save U.S. Imperialism" excellently illuminates an important historical fact about the genocidal use of atomic warfare during World War II, but its claims about the long-term effects of this nuclear technology can be misused by anti-nuclear dogmatists who lose sight of the potentially positive use of nuclear power in a worker-run society. It correctly points out that the US bosses' use of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities in August, 1945 was an offensive measure aimed at the growing Soviet state more so than an act of defending the citizens of the US from imminent Japanese attack.

However, the idea that one lasting outcome of this genocidal warfare is residual genetic defects among some Japanese people to this day is patently false. This factoid, though at one time widely believed,or has been convincingly debunked (see Bernard R. Jordan's 2016 analysis at doi.org). In addition to distorting past history, this misinformation contributes to the phobia of all things nuclear that is befogging present debates over possible alternatives to fossil-based fuels. So there is a good deal at stake—as the article points out—in getting out the whole truth, both political and scientific, about the tragic events of August 1945 and their aftermath.

★★★★★★★

Haiti: natural disasters compound capitalist-made crisis

Another earthquake. Another storm. Nearly 2000 confirmed dead so far, many more wounded. At least 60,000 homes were destroyed. Before this latest disaster 60 percent of workers in Haiti lived in poverty, 25 percent in extreme poverty. But ordinary people have never stopped organizing themselves and fighting for a better life.

Haiti was the first to form an independent Black nation after overthrowing slavery in 1791. For that audacious act of overthrowing racist slavery they have been punished ever since. France demanded the repayment of $21 million for the "theft" of its slaves, not repaid until 1947. The US invaded in 1915 and occupied the island for 19 years, enacting forced labor and the murder of resisters and stealing 40% of Haiti's output. Until 2000, the US and the IMF manipulated tariffs, the economy and financed coups. In 2000 Haitians elected the reformer Aristede, who, even though he was no friend to communism or the idea of workers running society, so threatened US and Haitian elites that he was kidnapped and whisked away to Africa.

A massive earthquake in 2010 killed over 200,000, destroyed much infrastructure, and left Haiti vulnerable to a cholera epidemic brought by UN peacekeepers. Most of the aid sent to the island was lost to government and NGO corruption. Since then a series of feckless Presidents have been manipulated into office by the US, the latest one assassinated by parties unknown only weeks ago.

In the western region where the latest quake occurred, no government presence has been seen. Local workers and students and community organizations are fighting as much as they can.

★★★★★

From LA to DC: Families, antiracists, communists—smash racist police terror

Continued from page 1

Communist influence spreads

PL'ers from DC and Baltimore brought much-needed supplies, offered rides, and brought a communist banner. Their work for the last eight years organizing with the family of Tyrone West (killed by police in 2013) has shown us a path in this fight. It was especially important for our LA families to see comrades from the East Coast in their PLP T-shirts, distributing CHALLENGE openly (75 papers and 150 flyers) along with a banner.

One of the Mass Action leaders tried to get our East Coast PL'ers to relocate their literature table. An LA comrade was able to talk with him, and given the fact that he knew the number of families we brought and the support we have among them, the organizer was forced to back down and allow our comrades to operate openly.

Our leadership was illustrated in all aspects of the trip. Although we were unsure whether our mass organization could pull it off, leadership from PLP yielded in donations to cover flights and hotel expenses. One PL'er celebrated her birthday by asking for funds and dozens of supporters of this mass organization created art to raise money.

Another comrade gave logistical leadership—organized the tickets, hotels, and more. She was also asked by the Flores family (family of Alex Flores, murdered by LAPD in 2019) to give the English translation of their speech, which highlighted their trust in this PL'er that developed over nearly two years.

It also helped dispel some of the anti-white working-class sentiment that tends to come up inside and outside our mass organization. She is seen as a leader, comrade, and trusted confidante of many families, and her leadership role in DC has helped strengthen this.

Longhaul fight

The families appreciated the role PLP and the LA mass organization played in getting them to DC. The families closest to the Party mentioned that it was emotional and overwhelming being on stage and speaking to so many other families and hearing their stories that were all so similar, particularly with folks being murdered while in a mental crisis. "It was difficult to speak, like I had a knot in my throat, but it was a blessing to meet with so many other families from all over the country."

It was especially hard for one PL'er; the next day marked the four-year Angelversary of her brother who was murdered by killer cops after being thrown in front of a moving train! We had a small ceremony for her with a few of the families we are close with that was led by the aforementioned sister whose brother was killed in front of her. It was a powerful moment. Heartbreaking and yet the pulse of the masses could be felt.

Another mother's class anger helped her ask the PLP to organize with families for a nationwide march. While it is true that the mother has some faith in reforms, she also says that we will likely need a revolution to really stop these killer cops.

If we are immersed with these families for the long haul, these lifelong fighters will become the gravediggers of this racist, sexist, murderous capitalist system! It has been an honor to fight alongside these families!

PLP fights for a communist revolution. Join the fightback!✪

GLOSSARY

COMMUNIST TERMS

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Student-worker unity

Alabama coal miner strike: solidarity, struggle, revolution

As we made friends and talked about workers' power and revolution, we picketed and volunteered with the union's Women's Auxiliary. These strong women workers kept the miners and families fed and supplied. Soon, we were "part of the family" and given important tasks like ferrying supplies to picket lines and union halls in the mountains.

The bosses' government and revolution

The U.S. capitalist state (government) power in Tuscaloosa County is palpable.

The entire state apparatus is in the bosses' pockets, from the county judge to the governor; from the police to the National Labor Relations Board in Washington; Republican Party to Democratic Party.

Court injunctions issued by the local judge forbid miners from blocking the scabs. The judge said the word scab was "offensive" and may constitute hate speech. In Alabama, a state with virtually no gun regulations, strikers are forbidden to carry firearms on the picket line.

Meanwhile, scabs and owners have openly shot at miners and run over several with their cars while police looked the other way. The state troopers told us they could do nothing if we got shot.

The miners are facing down the entire capitalist state. Warrior Met and its top Wall Street investor, BlackRock, want to crush the largest unionized mine in Alabama. PLP fights to organize workers to break the bosses' laws that only serve the capitalists. We invite the miners to join PLP and organize to overthrow this entire capitalist state with communist revolution and build our own workers' state.

Black workers: key to communist revolution

PL'ers and miners picketing as state troopers protect scab buses

The bonds of comradeship between Black and white miners painted a vibrant picture of multiracial unity. Unlike the fake liberal woke garbage of identity politics, these miners show why multiracial unity is so deadly to capitalism and vital for the working class.

The bosses' electoral circus offers nothing for workers. The Democratic Party promotes liberal fascist identity politics. They have abandoned white workers to gutter racist Donald Trump, who just had a mass rally in Alabama and never mentioned the strike.

Black miners hail from the most brutally attacked section of the working class. As one Black miner and new CHALLENGE reader confided, Black miners know enemies from friends, and our communist politics are a threat to the bosses.

They share their sharp analysis of the bosses' state with their white sisters and brothers. They are clear on how racism divides and hurts all workers.

Power of industrial workers

The bosses divide us to maintain their racist profit system. Warrior Met miners know better than anyone how much profits the bosses make. Coal miners, like all workers in basic industries, are closest to the heart of capitalist production. They're also closest to shutting down the entire capitalist system. Capitalists worldwide rely on Alabama miners' quality, high-sulfur coal for everything from construction to weapons, and rail workers at CSX transport $2 million per day of coal to the Port of Mobile. Under the leadership of industrial workers like the Warrior Met coal miners, a mass, fighting PLP can transform the coming imperialist war into a class war for workers' power.

Meanwhile, through our unions, student groups, and mass organizations, we are gearing up to send relief to the miners. From the early days of our Party with the Hazard Miners' Solidarity Campaign of 1962 (see CHALLENGE, 5/7/15) to today, solidarity runs deep in our Party's history. With two dozen contacts and eight CHALLENGE subscriptions, multiracial class solidarity like this will bring a communist world even closer✪.

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Abbreviations
NYT= New York Times

Racist policing in Cincinnati

Bloomberg, 9/1—The Queen City had been heralded as a model for community policing. After the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown, news outlets across the country lauded the CPD as a case study in how police departments could work with and better serve Black residents. In April 2001, a CPD officer shot and killed 19-year-old Timothy Thomas. His death was the last straw for Black Cincinnatians, who make up more than 40% of the city's residents. Hundreds were arrested. Already facing an economic boycott from local activists and a class-action racial discrimination lawsuit,... a federal judge settled the lawsuit ...imposing reforms in what would become known as "the Collaborative." People celebrated the Cincinnati collaborative for 10 years," says Saul Green, a federal monitor who for years oversaw the reforms. "Nobody in those celebrations pulled back the layers and really checked to see what was going on." Today CPD ...has "abandoned the principles of" and "unilaterally withdrawn from the Collaborative Agreement."

North Korean nukes

Foreign Affairs, September/October—In the 15 years since North Korea's first-ever nuclear test, the country has amassed up to 60 nuclear warheads and enough fissile material to build at least six additional bombs every year...these weapons can now most likely reach the continental United States. North Korea is likely moving on to the next step: placing multiple warheads on a single missile, which would allow it to frustrate U.S. missile defenses…Japan and South Korea, in turn, could lose confidence in the U.S. nuclear umbrella and feel compelled to field their own nuclear weapons, setting off a destabilizing nuclear arms race across the region.

Europeans losing confidence in the U.S.

The Economist, 9/4—…when the French ambassador to Kabul, David Martinon, recorded a message to fellow citizens, gravity crushed festivity…"the situation in Afghanistan is extremely concerning." The French embassy, he said, had completed its evacuation of Afghan employees. When the French began to pull out Afghan staff and their families in May, even friends accused them of defeatism, and of hastening the regime's collapse. Yet there has been quiet satisfaction in Paris. Their plans showed "impressive foresight", says Lord Ricketts, a former British ambassador to France. Tom Tugendhat, a Conservative mp who served in Afghanistan, urged Britain "to make sure that we are not dependent on a single ally", naming France and Germany as potential partners. Ben Wallace, Britain's defence secretary, suggested that his armed forces should be ready to "join different coalitions and not be dependent on one nation". "We've all been equally humiliated by the Americans," says a British diplomat, … For conflict-shy Germany, Afghanistan was a formative experience. Armin Laschet, the conservative candidate for Germany's chancellorship, described the withdrawal as "the greatest debacle that NATO has experienced since its foundation".

War in the Horn of Africa

NYT, 8/22—He swept to power preaching unity and hope, struck a landmark peace deal with the longtime foe Eritrea, released thousands of political prisoners, lifted restrictions on the press and promised to overturn decades of repressive authoritarian rule. For those accomplishments, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.

But now, mired in a grinding civil war, Mr. Abiy has embarked on a radically different track, … urging all able-bodied men and women to join a widening military campaign, either as combatants or in support roles. Over the past nine months of conflict, thousands of people have been killed and some two million have been displaced, while hundreds of thousands of others face famine conditions amid reports of massacres, sexual assault and ethnic cleansing. The war has quickly escalated, with militia fighters and Eritrean troops joining the Ethiopian military against the Tigrayan forces. In June, Mr. Abiy declared a unilateral cease-fire after the rebels shockingly routed the government forces.

Liberal bosses' police reform movement builds fascism

LOS ANGELES, September 7—The worldwide multiracial, antiracist upsurge in the wake of the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many others was a positive development for the international working class. The mass rebellions and flurry of protests activated countless previously-passive antiracists, and became possibly the largest worldwide movement against racism in recent history. These mass actions gave revolutionary communists an enormous opportunity to expose how racism is endemic to the capitalist system, and that it can never be eliminated without the violent overthrow of the ruling class that profits from it (see front page).

But, we must also be clear about who leads this movement—the main wing of the U.S. ruling class. The actions of the masses were quickly misled into electoral politics by groups loyal to the Big Fascists (see glossary, page 6).These Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They are also the imperialists who are trying to defend their worldwide empire against competition from Chinese and Russian imperialists.

We must attack the capitalist leadership, expose the limits of reform, and show the need for a communist revolution. In the mass movement against police violence, that means pointing out the fundamental role of the police under capitalism: to preserve the private property of the capitalist class, protect the profits they reap from the exploitation of the labor power of the working class, and terrorize workers from fighting back.

Liberal racist push pro-cop bills

In the aftermath of the rebellions, calls for "defunding (or dismantling) the police", "reimagining policing", and "investing in the community" emanated from the mouths of Democratic Party politicians, including some prominent leaders of liberal-faced fascism, congressperson Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) and Vice-President Kamala Harris, among others. These public statements were meant to quell the militancy of the movement and mislead honest antiracists into supporting now-President Joe Biden and the Democrats in the 2020 elections.

With the help of the capitalist media, an organ of class rule, the Democrats were largely successful in getting many people off the streets, and into the voting booths. CNN, MSNBC, and other liberal media had attacked the Small Fascist (see glossary, page 6) President Donald Trump and promoted Biden's candidacy, and a few highly-publicized prosecutions of particularly grisly murders by cop terrorists.

Now, there is a competition between Republicans and Democrats over who is more pro-cop. This battle has included attacks on Republican Senators and Congresspeople for opposing president Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan (ARP), which restored funding that had been cut during the pandemic to hundreds of police departments all over the U.S., and brazen support for pro-cop Republican amendments to Biden's $3.5 trillion federal budget plan.

When openly racist Senator Tommy Tuberville from Alabama proposed an amendment to the budget resolution requiring the "defunding" of any local government entity that has the audacity to vote to shift money from police budgets to social services, New Jersey Democratic Senator Cory Booker got up on the Senate floor to hug Tuberville.

A "reach across the aisle" that boldly communicated Black and Latin working-class lives will never matter to ruling-class leadership. Booker thanked Tuberville for his "gift", which he said would allow the Democratic Party to "put to bed this scurrilous accusation that" anybody in the Senate "would want to defund the police." The Senate then voted 99-0 to adopt Tuberville's amendment (Forbes, 8/11).

When right-wing Missouri Senator Josh Hawley proposed a budget amendment to fund the hiring of 100,000 more cops by cities and counties, the Dems voted overwhelmingly (95-3) to adopt that one, too (Intelligencer at nymag.com, August 13). Not wanting there to be any confusion about the liberal bosses' history of abject pro-cop advocacy, Illinois Senator Dick Durbin pointed out during debate that Hawley's funding plan was merely an extension of a program established through 1994 legislation spearheaded by then-Senator Biden and signed into law under former President Bill Clinton (Forbes, 8/11).

Old ...Jim Crow' Biden

The Republican-Democratic unanimity in these votes harkened back to Biden's love affair with two powerful segregationist Senators, Democrat James O. Eastland, and Republican Strom Thurmond. Biden's sordid history of support for racist cop terror and mass incarceration goes back decades (NY Times, 6/5/19).

Starting in 1984, Biden, in concert with his two openly racist pals, engineered three major federal crime bills that both led to large increases in a disproportionately Black and Latin federal jail population, and encouraged states to tighten the police state in their own jurisdictions. These laws included the infamous "100 to one" disparity in the amount of powder compared to crack cocaine sufficient to trigger mandatory minimum sentences, which led to much longer federal jail sentences for predominately Black defendants. Other bills legalized "civil asset forfeiture," allowing cop and prosecutor seizures of cash, cars, etc. before a criminal conviction, and increased federal penalties for drug possession (Vox, 6/20/19).

The liberal bosses' disgusting racism on a national level has been mirrored in state and local legislative bodies. For example, in California, Democrats hold a supermajority of seats in both the State Senate and Assembly, allowing them to pass legislation without any Republican support, and have held the governorship for a decade. To buy off the hundreds of thousands in California who hit the streets after the murder of George Floyd, some "progressive" Democrats introduced "police reform" bills.

If they had passed, they would have at best played a minor role in reining in cop terror. Examples of changes: the bills would have authorized cutting back on tear gas and rubber bullets, allowing more access to police records, and "decertification" of brutal cops fired from one department who try to get hired as cops elsewhere. But, "under the pressure of intense lobbying by" police unions, Democratic legislators "publically sympathetic to the cause but privately circumspect" blocked any of the bills from being voted on (LA Times, 9/2/20). These changes do not change the fundamental oppressive relationship of the police to the working class.

In 2020, amid mass demonstrations against police murders in Los Angeles and a great deal of hoopla about "reimagining policing" by some Democratic council people here, the Council voted to transfer some funds from the LAPD to social services and mental health "initiatives."

All that changed this year.

The Council ratified Mayor Eric Garcetti's proposed three percent increase in LAPD funding, voting 15-0 to give part of LA's pandemic-rescue-plan funds to the cops. (LA Times, 5/21) The unanimous vote included Councilperson Nithya Raman, a self-proclaimed "Democratic Socialist" (read: Fascist).

The liberal bosses are attempting to build back some legitimacy in their racist institutions. Posturing as friends of antiracists is part of their move as warmakers. The bosses are in desperate need of a population willing to fight in the coming war against their rivals China and Russia (see editorial, page 2).

The capitalist class will never allow its front-line defenders to be defunded or abolished. A communist revolution will abolish the theft of wage slavery, a crime for which the capitalists will be found guilty as charged. ✪

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